



Testimony
Elizabeth Gara, Executive Director
Connecticut Water Works Association
Before the
Environment Committee
February 27, 2015

The Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA), a trade association of municipal, regional and private water utilities, appreciates the opportunity to comment on **SB-363, AN ACT REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION TO CONDUCT A STUDY OF PRIVATE PROPERTY OWNERS' WATER RIGHTS.**

The bill directs the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to conduct a study of private property owners' water rights in the state, including the right to use groundwater located on the property. It is unclear what issue prompted the need for this study. However, if the committee moves forward with language to study this issue, the bill should ensure that the study is done in conjunction with the state Department of Public Health, which has cognizance over drinking water supplies, and the Office of Policy and Management, which oversees the development of the State Plan of Conservation and Development and the Drought Management Plan and the Department of Consumer Protection which regulates well drillers.

There is considerable work already being done to look at the state's water resources and needs under the requirements of PA 14-163, which directs the Water Planning Council to develop a State Water Plan. That may be a more appropriate venue to consider this matter rather than a separate study.

As an association of public water suppliers, CWWA clearly has an interest in issues involving water rights and groundwater. For example, there are many statutes that address public water supplies and legal rights that have been conferred on water utilities that must be preserved to ensure that water utilities may meet their obligation to provide safe adequate water supplies to meet the current and future needs of the communities we serve. As such, we respectfully request to be included in any discussions regarding the scope of the bill as it moves forward in the legislative process and to have input into or review of any study that is performed.

Thank you.

The Connecticut Water Works Association, Inc. (CWWA) is an association of municipal, private and regional water utilities serving more than 500,000 customers, or population of about 2½ million people, located throughout Connecticut.